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## Senate

The Senate met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SHERROD BROWN, a Senator from the State of Ohio.

### PRAYER

The Chaplain, Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Spirit of the living God, fix our thoughts on You. Let not arrogant or impure thinking distract us from listening to You. Focus the attention of our Senators on serving You as they seek to do Your will. Make them wise to discern what they don't know.

Lord, today, enable our lawmakers to debate without quarreling. May they strengthen their friendships with each other. Inspire them to become disciplined followers, always ready to obey Your commands. May their lives be open letters for You that people can receive blessings from reading. Guide, teach, and strengthen our Senators until they reflect Your image of purity, gentleness, honesty, humility, generosity, and love.

We pray in Your blessed Name. Amen.

### APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, March 23, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, section 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable SHERROD BROWN, a Senator from the State of Ohio, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. BROWN thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

### RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

### SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, the Senate will immediately resume consideration of the budget resolution, and only 30 minutes remains for debate. That time is equally divided between the two managers of the bill.

It is my understanding that the staffs of the chair and ranking member have been in discussions about establishing some order in the way the amendments will be voted on during the early stages of this vote-arama.

Members are asked to stay near the Chamber once the voting begins. There will be 10-minute votes all day long, and that time will be enforced for both sides.

### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

### CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET FOR THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2008

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of S. Con. Res. 21, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A concurrent resolution (S. Con. Res. 21) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for the fiscal year 2008 and including the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2007 and 2009 through 2012.

Pending:

Kyl/Thune amendment No. 583, to reform the death tax by setting the exemption at \$5 million per estate, indexed for inflation, and

the top death tax rate at no more than 35 percent beginning in 2010, to avoid subjecting an estimated 119,200 families, family businesses, and family farms to the death tax each and every year, to promote continued economic growth and job creation, and to make the enhanced teacher deduction permanent.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be 30 minutes of debate equally divided and controlled between the chairman and ranking member of the Budget Committee.

The Senator from North Dakota is recognized.

Mr. CONRAD. Mr. President, first, I thank the Chaplain for the most excellent prayer that he offered today. I think it set the right tone for today's discussions. I hope very much that while we may disagree strenuously, we can do so in a civil way. I thank especially the ranking member, Senator GREGG, for the way he has conducted this debate on the other side throughout. As is always the case with him, it has been thoroughly professional. It has set an excellent tone. We have vigorous disagreements on policy from time to time, but there are many areas where we actually agree. With him in leadership, it has always been done in a professional way. We especially appreciate the cooperation from all of our colleagues and especially from the ranking member and his outstanding staff.

The budget, as it stands at this moment, takes us in a new direction. It takes us back to fiscal responsibility. It takes us toward a balanced budget by 2012. Here is where the budget stands as of the latest numbers that we have after action last night. Every year of the 5-year budget the deficits will be reduced until we are in balance in 2012, albeit just barely.

The next chart. The debt under the budget resolution, the gross debt of the United States as a percentage of GDP, will finally start to head down instead of increasing year after year after year.

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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